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# Executive Summary

## Introduction

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) serves the state's children, youth, families, and people who are elderly or have disabilities.

The 2011 Annual Report and Data Book is an overview of the department's programs, services, performance, and accomplishments, plus a comprehensive statistical explanation of DFPS services. This report covers the fiscal year beginning September 1, 2010 through August 31, 2011. This report and additional information can be found on the department's website at [www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us).

## Mission

The mission of DFPS is to protect children and people who are elderly or who have disabilities from abuse, neglect, and exploitation by involving clients, families, and communities.

## Vision

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services:

- Is recognized for innovative, effective services.
- Builds strong, effective partnerships with clients, communities, providers, and state leaders.
- Provides effective leadership that is accountable for its actions and communicates openly with clients and stakeholders.
- Supports staff members who are highly motivated, diverse, ethical, well-trained, and professional.

## Values

- We protect the unprotected.
- We involve clients, families, and communities in decision making.
- We provide quality services.
- We are innovative and strive for excellence.
- We are ethical and accountable.
- We promote diversity.
- We value our staff.

## DFPS Staffing and Structure

The DFPS Commissioner is appointed by the Executive Commissioner of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission and directs 10,621 employees in 353 local offices. These offices are located in 11 regions and a state headquarters in Austin. DFPS has four major programs: Child Protective Services (CPS), Adult Protective Services (APS), Child Care Licensing (CCL), and Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI), which is administered as part of CPS.

A nine-member council is appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. The council makes recommendations on the department's rules and policies and provides a venue for public input.

For more information on staffing, see: DFPS Data Book, pages 1, 7, 23, 29, 75, 91 and 109 under "Expenditures and Total Average Filled Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Staff," "Worker Demographics," and "Supervisor Demographics."

## Texas Abuse Hotline

State law requires anyone who believes a child is being abused or neglected, or an adult who is 65 years or older or who has a disability is being abused, neglected, or exploited, must report it. These reports are handled by Texas Abuse Hotline (1-800-252-5400), which is operated by DFPS' Statewide Intake program. The 24-hour hotline receives reports of suspected abuse or neglect from across the state. Reports can also be made online through a secure website at <https://www.TxAbuseHotline.org>.

DFPS manages a separate hotline for reporting abuse in state-operated facilities and facilities operated by community providers that serve adults and children with mental illness or intellectual disabilities. These facilities and providers are managed by the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) and the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS).





To report abuse, neglect or exploitation in these facilities and programs, the public should contact 1-800-647-7418.

Reports meeting the statutory definitions of abuse and neglect are investigated after intake caseworkers have assigned a priority based on the level of risk to the alleged victim. Intake caseworkers also notify law enforcement agencies of reports involving children.

For more information on Statewide Intake and In-

take of Reports, see: DFPS Data Book, pages 1-5, 12-13, 38, 127-133 (APS), 134-139 (CPS).

## Emergency Resource Rooms

In emergency resource rooms caseworkers can get emergency supplies or special items such as diapers, cleaning supplies, clothes, and small furniture to meet the needs of their clients. 233 resource rooms, called "Rainbow Rooms" by CPS and "Silver Star Rooms" or "Bridge Rooms" by APS, served 68,170 clients in FY 2011.

For more information on Rainbow Rooms, see Giving Texas Children Promise in the Child Protective Services section.

## DFPS Volunteers

Though dedicated and skilled, DFPS caseworkers rely on communtaction and awareness to assist families struggling with abuse, neglect,



and exploitation. In FY 2011, over 3,000 DFPS volunteers and volunteer groups worked over 135,000 hours, side by side with employees.

Trained DFPS volunteers:

- Deliver prevention and intervention services.
- Promote policies and programs that build healthy families.
- Expand a network of community resources that support and nurture DFPS clients.
- Make unique contributions to those Texans least able to protect themselves.

## Office of Consumer Affairs

The Office of Consumer Affairs (OCA) was created in 1993 to handle complaints and legislative inquiries relating to DFPS programs. The purpose of the complaint process is to address the concerns of DFPS clients, their families, other stakeholders, and the public in a fair and unbiased manner. OCA also documents and shares the results of their reviews with



DFPS state and regional administrators to help improve the quality of services. Individuals may contact the OCA by calling a toll number (1-800-720-7777), through the DFPS website, or by email at OCA@DFPS.state.tx.us.

OCA handled 3,783 complaints, 16,430 general inquiries, and 787 legislative inquiries in FY 2011. OCA found that 7.3 percent of complaints and concerns were valid.

# Adult Protective Services

## Responsibilities

The responsibilities of Adult Protective Services (APS) are to:

- Investigate reports of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of adults in the community who are 65 or older or who have disabilities and to provide or arrange for protective services as needed.
- Investigate reports of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of individuals receiving services in state-operated facilities and in state contracted community settings that serve adults and children with mental illness or intellectual disabilities.

## 2011 Accomplishments and Initiatives

### Regional Reviews

In FY 2011, APS State Office staff met with staff in the Dallas area and in El Paso to review program performance, learn about best practices, and better understand the unique challenges faced by frontline workers. The results of these reviews were used to improve APS policy and casework practice. Other areas of the state will be reviewed in coming years.

### Improvements to Investigations

In FY 2011, APS continued its effort to improve the timeliness and efficiency of facility investigations. The Department of Justice settlement with the State of Texas in 2009 required that APS complete investigations in State Supported Living Centers (SSLCs) and the Rio Grande State Center (involving people with intellectual disabilities) within 10 days, rather than 14 or 21 days. As one of the steps taken to address this, APS began working with the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services to locate APS investigators at State Supported Living Centers. The goal is to reduce travel time and cost, and improve access to center staff and clients. In FY 2011, APS also trained facility investigators to enter witness statements on their tablet computers. This eliminates the time spent scanning handwritten statements and paraphrasing them.

### Improvements to In-Home Investigations and Services

In FY 2011, APS leveraged the knowledge and experience of frontline, in-home investigation staff by holding focus groups across the state. The groups addressed a wide range of casework issues with at-

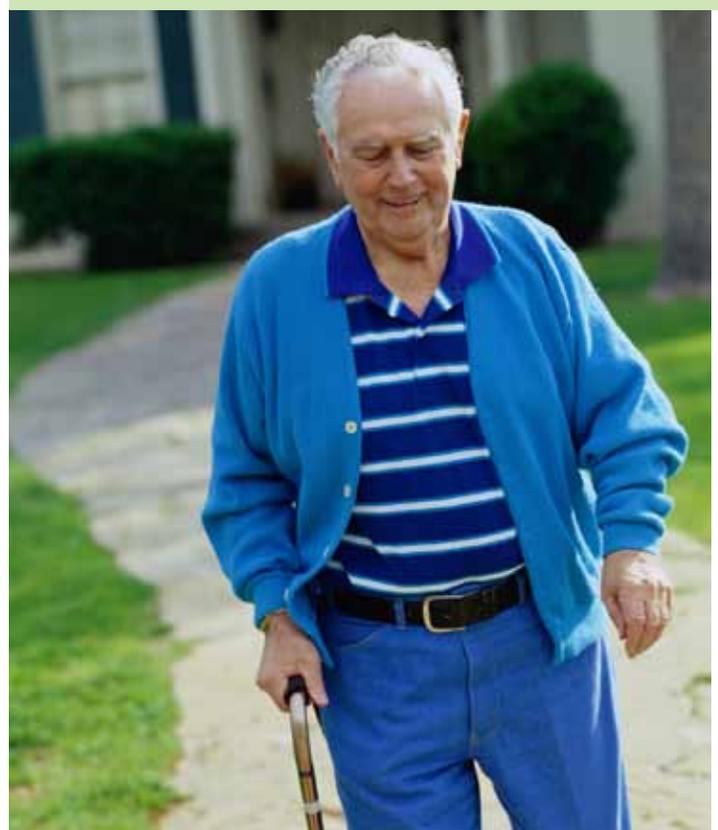
tention on regional differences in practice and client circumstances. APS workgroups studied the responsibilities of supervisors. APS used feedback from the workgroups to streamline and clarify APS policy and regional practice.

### Public Awareness

APS continued its public awareness campaign called "It's Everyone's Business" during FY 2011. The goals of the campaign are to raise awareness about the problems of adult abuse, neglect, and exploitation, enlist community collaboration and support, and increase awareness of APS programs. The campaign targets the general public, law enforcement, judicial partners, and organizations that provide services to vulnerable adults.

May is Elder Abuse Awareness Month. In May 2011, APS partnered with community agencies to promote education and awareness of elder abuse. Regional conferences, local media campaigns, and state and county proclamations highlighted the importance of protecting vulnerable adults.

In October 2010, the It's Everyone's Business campaign focused on financial exploitation with the theme of "If it's not your money, it's a crime." Regions worked





with community partners, including law enforcement agencies, district attorneys, and banking institutions to provide education and awareness about financial exploitation of the elderly. To

learn more about APS public awareness activities and download information on elder abuse and exploitation, visit <http://www.EveryonesBusiness.org>.

### Texas Partners for Adult Protective Services

Texas Partners for Adult Protective Services is the statewide APS-affiliated non-profit organization that helps improve the lives of APS clients by developing resources and providing assistance to local boards that support APS. Local Texas Boards:

- Sponsor community events to raise funds to purchase items for APS clients.
- Assist APS staff with educating the public and other service providers about elder abuse issues.
- Provide expertise as speakers for community events and training.
- Sponsor APS staff with recognition and appreciation events.
- Stock and maintain emergency resource rooms in APS offices, giving APS caseworkers easy access to basic necessities for clients in need.

### APS Conference

APS held its 27th Annual APS Conference in San Antonio during October 2010. The conference offered three general sessions and 39 workshops. Workshops included Financial Exploitation of Individuals who are Elderly or have Disabilities, Improving Service Delivery Planning for APS Clients, and Detecting Deception and Obtaining the Truth During Interviews. Every year, the APS Conference gives staff the chance to network and to learn from and with others who serve, treat, and represent victims of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. The annual conference is a major national training event that offers continuing education credits to social workers.

### APS Programs

Two program areas serve APS clients: In-Home Investigations and Services, and Facility Investigations.

As the population of adults who are elderly or have a disability continues to grow, so does the need for protective services. APS workload increased in both the In-Home and Facility programs in 2011. Many of these individuals live alone and depend on others for care.

For more information on Texas population demographics, see: DFPS Data Book, pages 10-11, 125-130.

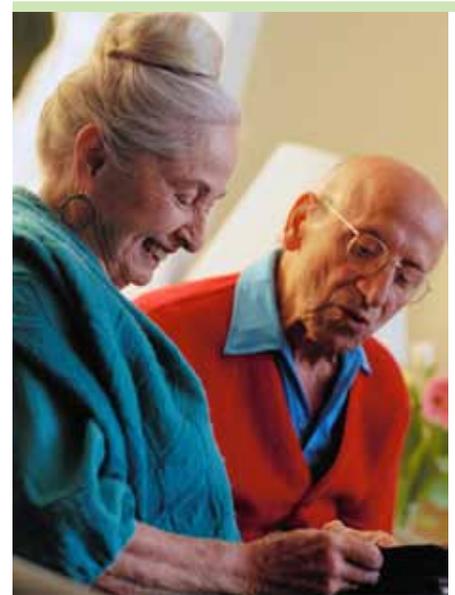
### In-Home Investigations and Services

The largest APS program area is In-Home Investigations and Services. The In-Home program investigates allegations of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of the elderly or adults with disabilities who reside in their own homes or in unlicensed room-and-board homes.



APS also investigates allegations of exploitation involving vulnerable adults living in nursing homes who may be financially exploited by someone outside the facility. State law requires anyone who believes that an elderly person or adult with a disability is being abused, neglected, or exploited to report it. Reports are made to the DFPS hotline at 1-800-252-5400 or online at <https://www.TxAbuseHotline.org>.

An investigation begins with initial contact by phone or in person with a person who has reliable and current information about the alleged victim within 24 hours of receiving a report. If the allegation is confirmed, APS may provide or arrange for emergency services to alleviate abuse, neglect, or exploitation. These services may include short-term shelter, food, medication,



# You can tell, her heart is really in it.

**Thankful client  
says, “You need  
many employees  
like her.”**

**Glenda Scott,**



**an APS client, and Sharon Hernandez, her caseworker**

The record heat in the summer of 2011 was tough on all Texans but paying sky-high electric bills was especially hard on people who are elderly or have disabilities and live on limited incomes.

“Some of our clients had \$800 to \$1,000 electric bills,” says APS Investigator Sharon Hernandez (right). “When you are on a fixed income, it is tough keeping up. They went to other agencies for help but they were out of funds.”

Glenda Scott (left) not only had trouble paying for utilities, groceries, and medication but she also had high medical bills due to a brain tumor, a recent surgery, and other problems. She didn’t

know where to turn until she was referred to Adult Protective Services.

“When I first got her as a client, she was doing okay but then she needed surgery and broke her arm,” says Hernandez. “She couldn’t do what she needed to do even with some help from her grandson.” Hernandez arranged for Scott to get help with cooking, cleaning, and other home-making duties.

Scott is very thankful for Sharon Hernandez. A retired fraud investigator, Scott had worked with social workers in the past. “You need many employees like Sharon,” says Scott. “She’s

not only a caseworker, she’s a good person, a friend, and young woman you can rely on. APS is fortunate to have workers like her. She’s not there just for a paycheck -- her heart is really in it. You can feel the warmth in her. Thank you, Sharon Hernandez. May God bless you in every area of your life.”

After earning a bachelor’s degree in psychology, Sharon worked with children for a year before joining APS four years ago. “I’m really glad I have a chance to work with this population. They have a different perspective on life. They’ve experienced so much that we haven’t. I learn from all my clients and really enjoy it.”

**“She’s not only a caseworker, she’s a good person, a friend, and young woman you can rely on. APS is fortunate to have workers like her.”**



health services, financial assistance for rent and utility restoration, transportation, and minor home repair. APS works in partnership with other social service agencies to provide resources to vulnerable adults. APS also works closely with the Texas Department

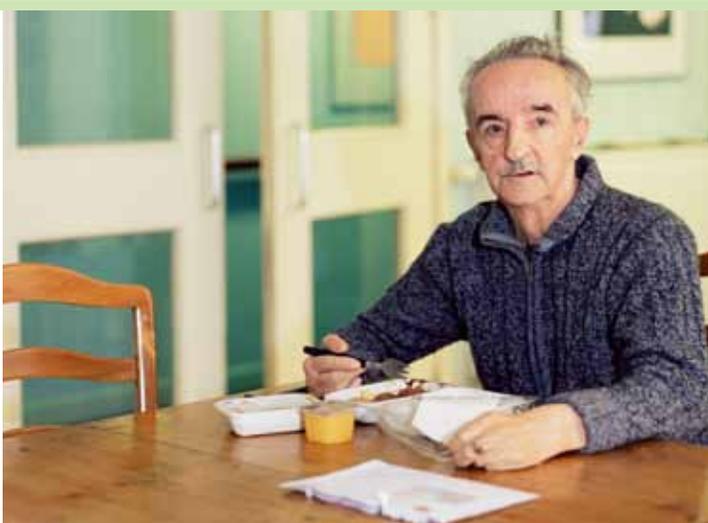
of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) on cases that require coordination and referral for guardianship services. APS investigators or DFPS intake caseworkers may notify law enforcement at any point during an investigation if they suspect allegations of abuse, neglect, or exploitation constitute a criminal offense.

For more information, see: [DFPS Data Book, pages 12-21, 125-130.](#)

### Facility Investigations

APS is responsible for investigating abuse, neglect, and exploitation of people receiving services in state-operated facilities and in state contracted community settings that serve adults and children with mental illness or intellectual disabilities. Investigations are conducted in:

- State-supported living centers, state hospitals, and the Rio Grande State Center (some components).



- Community mental health and mental retardation centers.
- Privately-operated intermediate care facilities for people with intellectual disabilities.
- Home and community-based waiver programs.

APS starts an investigation after the DFPS Abuse Hotline receives an allegation. It notifies the facility or provider agency within one hour and notifies law enforcement and the Health and Human Services Commission Office of Inspector General (OIG) within one hour if necessary. APS completes the investigation, makes a finding for each allegation, and sends a report to the provider as well as law enforcement and



OIG if necessary. The provider is responsible for taking appropriate steps to protect their clients. APS also determines if the perpetrator meets the criteria for being added to the Employee Misconduct Registry, which bars

people from certain types of jobs that involve working with people with disabilities (this is also the case for certain types of in-home cases). DFPS will send the name of the confirmed perpetrator to the registry after due process is satisfied.

For more information, see: [DFPS Data Book, pages 23-27, 131-133.](#)



# Child Care Licensing

## Responsibilities

The responsibilities of Child Care Licensing (CCL) are to:

- Regulate all child-care operations and child-placing agencies to protect the health, safety, and well-being of children in care.
- Establish and monitor operations and agencies for compliance with licensing standards, rules, and law.
- Inform parents and the public about child care, including the histories of specific homes, child-care operations, and child-placing agencies in complying with minimum standards of care.
- Provide technical assistance to child-care providers on meeting licensing standards, rules, and laws.

## 2011 Accomplishments and Initiatives

### Scope of Child Care

The child-care industry is a significant and growing part of the Texas economy. Child care is one of the top 20 fastest growing industries in the state. It contributes about 1.9 percent of all new jobs in Texas and enables over half a million parents to work, while providing a secure and stimulating environment for Texas' children.

### Improving Texas Child Care

In 2009 and 2010, CCL began a series of initiatives and invested \$4 million in federal economic stimulus funds



to enhance high-quality day-care programs for infants and toddlers. In 2011, CCL completed the plan for improving the quality of infant and toddler child-care programs. Some of the initiatives completed in 2011 are listed below:

- Technical Assistance Library—CCL created a centralized resource library for staff to share with those caring for infants and toddlers in regulated child-care settings. This library enhanced CCL's proactive approach to protecting children. The library lets staff provide technical assistance information to providers during an inspection. The library is continuously updated and has more than 137 documents. The library is available to everyone via the DFPS website.
- Tutorials—Working with AgriLife Texas Cooperative Extension (a part of the Texas A&M University system), CCL developed online tutorials for child-care providers, parents, caregivers, and CCL staff that focus on the healthy and safe care of infants.
- Advanced Instructor-led Training –AgriLife Texas Cooperative Extension developed advanced training for caregivers and other professionals working with infants and toddlers. This instructor-led training was made available statewide. It focuses on basic health, safety, nutrition, safe sleep practices, continuity of care, quality care environments, and the social, emotional, and cognitive development of infants and toddlers.
- Public Awareness Campaigns: There were two CCL campaigns featuring Radio and TV public service announcements, social media, and news media coverage.
  - ◆ Don't Be in the Dark—To educate the public on the importance of selecting regulated day care and improving communication with caregivers. [www.DontBelInTheDark.org](http://www.DontBelInTheDark.org).
  - ◆ Baby Room to Breathe - To educate public and child caregivers on ways to minimize the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and co-sleeping deaths and improve the health, safety, and development of infants and toddlers. [www.BabyRoomToBreathe.org](http://www.BabyRoomToBreathe.org).
- Pre-Application Online Course - In July 2011, CCL released an online pre-application course that is an introduction to becoming a child-care provider. The course is for prospective licensed, registered, and listed child-care homes.

# Not just a babysitter!



## **Nathalie Contreras, a child-care provider in Katy, visits with her Licensing representative, Christie Ayala**

Child Care Licensing staff in Houston hosted their 5th annual training conference on June 11, 2011. The conference included training sessions in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese. A total of 419 child care providers attended - 258 for the English sessions, 91 for the Spanish, and 70 for the Vietnamese.

Among those who attended was Nathalie Contreras, who has been providing child care at her own home since 2006. "I get trainings from other sources but the information I receive at CCL conferences is something I can readily apply at my home child care," she says. "The information on the state's minimum standards helps me understand the requirements and then I tell parents to help them understand their role."

One of the topics Contreras found most beneficial was a session on

preparing for possible emergencies or disasters. "The training was useful not only for my child care but for my family, too!" she says. "Now, I am more prepared to develop emergency disaster preparedness plans for my child care and my family. I am also notifying parents of the plan, which includes telling them where we will meet in case of an emergency." This fiscal year, Collaborative for Children/Workforce Solutions co-sponsored some of the emergency disaster trainings to over 480 child care providers.

Contreras says everyone in child care needs to remember they are professionals and that this job is not just about money. "Children often spend more time in child care than with their parents," she says. "They need to learn about things like setting limits. I need to ensure their developmental needs are met

to help them and their families. Child care providers should treat children in their care like their own children. And when dealing with Child Care Licensing, you need to be upfront and don't hide anything."

She also helps educate parents. "Being a child care provider is not just babysitting, changing diapers, and feeding children," says Contreras. "This is a profession that requires patience and I want to help children develop academically. I set routines for the children to keep them focused."

Each year, CCL staff in Houston work hard on every aspect of the conference. Since 2007, over 1,669 child-care providers have received free training at these conferences, totaling 12,664 classroom hours.

**Child care provider says, "Being a child care provider is not just babysitting."**

Additionally, CCL continued its oversight of residential operations by holding enforcement team conferences for residential treatment centers. The conferences review the facility's inspections and investigations and are designed to identify risk and begin strategies for reducing risk. In FY 2011, staff completed 108 enforcement team conferences in residential treatment centers.

### Legislative Initiatives

The 81st Texas Legislature passed Senate Bill 68, which requires DFPS to regulate certain programs for children not previously regulated by CCL. These include many skills or sports-based after-school programs and day care in environments such as domestic violence and homeless shelters. As a result, Child Care Licensing began regulating three new types of care in FY 2011:

- Before- and after-school care programs
- School-age/skills-based programs
- Temporary shelters providing child day-care services

CCL developed two new classes of standards to address the unique needs and services offered by these providers. Chapter 744 of the Human Resources Code focuses on school-age and before- or after-school programs, and Chapter 743 contains standards specific to (Temporary) shelter-care programs.

Senate Bill 68 also changed the main child-care law for Texas, Chapter 42 of the Human Resources Code, to refer specifically to "general residential operations" instead of "child-care institutions." In the past, "child-care institution" referred both to general residential operations and residential treatment centers. The wording was changed so all residential facilities are now called "general residential operations." While residential treatment centers are now a subset of general residential operations, their requirements have not changed. In FY 2011, CCL defined some other groups:

- All residential treatment centers.
- All operations offering child-care services only.



These operations do not provide emergency care or treatment services. They may provide a transitional living program.

- All operations offering emergency-care services (short-term basis). These operations may also provide respite care and are more commonly known as emergency shelters.
- All operations offering multiple services or any combination of treatment or programmatic services under the same license. This is the category for all operations that do not fit into one of the first three categories.

### Building Partnerships

CCL continues building and strengthening connections with community partners and other agencies and programs. Examples include the Texas Department of Public Safety, Texas Department of State Health Services, Texas Workforce Commission, AgriLife Texas Cooperative Extension (a part of the Texas A&M University system), the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services Division of Early Childhood Intervention, the Texas Association for the Education of Young Children, the Texas Licensed Child Care Association, the Texas Education Agency, the Texas Department of Agriculture, the State Fire Marshal's Office, and 2-1-1 Texas.

### CCL Services

CCL is responsible for protecting the health, safety, and well-being of children who are not in the immediate care of their families while they attend or reside in regulated child-care operations and homes and while in the process of being adopted.

Chapters 42 and 43 of the Texas Human Resources Code require CCL to develop licensing standards for

regulated operations and homes, as well as policies and procedures for enforcing those standards. CCL is responsible for inspecting child-care operations and investigating reports alleging violations of licensing standards or abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children in care. CCL also licenses child-care administrators and child-placing agency administrators. CCL provides technical assistance and training to potential applicants and child-care providers about complying with licensing standards. CCL also provides parents and other consumers with information about the types of child-care available, locations of child-care operations and homes in Texas, and the results of licensing inspections and investigations.

### Regulating Child Care Operations

CCL regulates three categories of child-care operations. They are listed family homes, registered child-care homes, and licensed operations (licensed child-care centers and homes, 24-hour residential care, and child-placing agencies).

### Listed Family Homes

Listed family homes provide child care on a regular basis (at least 4 hours per day, 3 or more days a week, for more than three consecutive weeks) in the providers' own homes for one to three unrelated children. Providers go through an application process that includes a criminal background check and getting a certificate. Listed family home providers must be at least 18 years old. However, there are no minimum standards and no orientation or training is required. Listed family homes are only inspected if DFPS



receives a report alleging child abuse or neglect or violations of certain health and safety standards. CCL also investigates reports of homes that are not properly listed or registered.

### Registered Child-Care Homes

Registered child-care homes provide care in the homes of providers for as many as 6 children younger than age 14 and as many as 6 additional school-age children. The number of children allowed in a home is determined by the ages of the children. No more than 12 children, including the provider's children, can be in care at any time. Providers are required to go through an application process that includes completing an orientation class and criminal background checks. DFPS issues a registration certificate after licensing inspectors complete an on-site inspection to ensure providers are meeting the minimum standards. Registered homes are inspected every one to two years. CCL also inspects them if it receives a report of child abuse or neglect or violations of standards.

### Licensed Operations

All licensed operations must follow published standards and are routinely monitored and inspected. The application process includes completing an orientation class and criminal background checks. CCL issues a license after completing on-site inspections to ensure providers are meeting minimum standards. Licensed operations are inspected every 5 to 12 months or more often if there are reports of alleged child abuse or neglect or violations of state standards. Licensed operations include Day Care and 24-Hour Residential Care.

### Child Day Care

- Licensed child-care homes provide care for less than 24 hours per day for seven or more children younger than age 14 in the caregiver's residence.
- Child-care centers provide care for seven or more children younger than age 14, for less than 24 hours per day, but at least two hours a day, three or more days a week, in a location other than the caregiver's residence.

### 24-Hour Residential Care

- Foster family homes provide 24-hour care for 6 or fewer children younger than age 18.
- Foster group homes provide 24-hour care for 7 to 12 children younger than age 18.
- General residential operations provide 24-hour care for 13 or more children younger than age 18 and may provide various treatment or programmatic

services. Residential treatment centers, a subset of general residential operations, provide care exclusively for children requiring treatment services for emotional disorders.

- Child-placing agencies are people or organizations other than a child's natural parent or guardian who plan for placement of a child or place a child in a child-care facility, foster home, or adoptive home.
- Maternity homes provide 24-hour care for four or more minor and/or adult women in the postpartum period.

For more information, see: [DFPS Data Book pages 78-105](#)

### Annual Report of Licensing Violations

CCL uses licensing standards to protect the basic health and safety of children in out-of-home care. The goal is to appropriately and consistently enforce minimum standards for all types of operations statewide.

Consistent enforcement aims to increase compliance by child-care operations and provide stronger protections for children. The regulation of child-care facilities and child-placing agencies routinely presents two challenges for licensing staff and permit holders alike: consistent interpretation of minimum standards; and consistent enforcement decisions and actions.



CCL analyzes trends in violations both statewide and regionally to get a better idea of the technical assistance providers will need in the future.

CCL analyzes trends in violations both statewide and regionally to get a better idea of the technical assistance providers will need in the future.

### Child Care Violation Trends

The DFPS Data Book includes a Statewide Trends Table of the top 10 standards deficiencies for day-care operations, based on an analysis of standard violations in FY 2011. Regional trend data is available upon request.

For information on statewide trends, see: [DFPS Data Book page 89](#).

### Residential Care Violation Trends

DFPS also publishes a Statewide Trends Table of the top 10 standards deficiencies for residential-care

operations, which is also derived from analyzing standard violations during FY 2011.

There is no regional analysis for residential-care operations because Residential Child Care Licensing (RCCL) is a statewide program.

For information on statewide trends, see: [DFPS Data Book page 105](#).

### Addressing Violation Trends with Technical Assistance

It is important to note that these violations were cited in various types of inspections. Some were cited during unannounced, routine monitoring inspections. Some were cited after a complaint about a specific incident. Others were cited during targeted, follow-up inspections. CCL puts emphasis on giving technical assistance to providers to help them comply with licensing standards. In addition, the data is shared with all management staff and field trainers to promote awareness of the need to provide targeted technical assistance to providers in an effort to improve compliance.

### Quality Assurance

CCL reviews cases and uses analyses by the DFPS Performance Management Division to identify trends and develop recommendations for training, program structure, policy, and practice. This improves the quality and consistency of monitoring and investigations. CCL staff review compliance history information that indicates a higher risk of harm to children and provide objective recommendations to ensure the safety of children in care. CCL uses an automated quality assurance and performance management system to obtain measurable feedback on employee casework.

### Training

To enhance the quality of child-care regulation, a broad range of CCL staff across the state received almost 15,000 hours of training and work-related professional development. Topics included child development, automation support, regulation and inspection of operations, and health and safety issues. At the same time, CCL staff provided more than 79 training events for almost 10,712 caregivers. Those topics included minimum standards, health and safety, infant and toddler needs, guidance, discipline, staff-to-child ratios, and child development. During the same period, CCL conducted 405 orientation sessions for 4,117 people. These sessions give an overview of the licensing process, including steps for completing an application and obtaining a permit to operate in Texas.

# Child Protective Services

## Responsibilities

The responsibilities of Child Protective Services are to:

- Conduct civil investigations of reports of child abuse and neglect.
- Protect children from abuse and neglect.
- Promote the safety, integrity, and stability of families.
- Provide permanent homes or living arrangements for children who cannot safely remain with their families.

## 2011 Accomplishments and Initiatives

### Child and Family Services Review

The Child and Family Services Review is used to measure and improve state child welfare systems and is administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The review monitors how states comply with federal requirements for child protection, foster care, adoption, family preservation and family support, and independent living services. This includes an analysis of statewide data, a statewide assessment, an onsite review, and a program improvement plan period. Each review evaluates seven outcomes involving child safety, permanency, and well-being. DFPS completed its last review in March 2008 and received a final federal report in March 2009. DFPS developed a program improvement plan that was federally approved and took effect on April 1, 2010 and will end March 31, 2013.

The plan includes these objectives:

- Strengthen critical decision-making skills, particularly involving safety.
- Enhance the capacity to place children in foster care in appropriate homes or settings closer to their families and communities.
- Remove barriers to finding permanent homes for children, especially when they remain in state care but parental rights are not terminated.
- Strengthen practices for family-based safety services (in-home services).

### Foster Care Redesign

Since January 2010, DFPS has been working on an initiative to improve outcomes for children and youth liv-

ing in foster care. The official name is "Improving Child/Youth Placement Outcomes: A System Redesign" but it is that is commonly known as Foster Care Redesign. The goal of the project is to create ongoing, community-based placements that will meet the needs of children and youth in the least restrictive settings.

The project has been guided by the Public Private Partnership, which is composed of 26 representatives including foster youth alumni, the judiciary, providers, trade associations, advocates, and DFPS staff. The partnership got input from many stakeholders, evaluated foster care models in other states, and analyzed Texas data. The partnership recommended a new foster care model to the DFPS Commissioner in December 2010. The proposed changes included how DFPS procures, contracts, and pays for foster care and other services for children in state care and their families.

DFPS endorsed the recommendations and the 82nd Texas Legislature passed Senate Bill 218, directing the department to put the new foster care model in place. In August 2011, DFPS issued a request for proposals for implementing the first stage of Foster Care Redesign in two designated areas of the state. DFPS intends to award contracts for those areas in early 2012.

For more information on the Foster Care Redesign model and status of implementation, please visit the Foster Care Redesign webpage: [http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child\\_Protection/Foster\\_Care/redesign.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Foster_Care/redesign.asp).

### Fostering Connections Act

The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 promotes finding permanent homes (permanency) for children and youth. The act emphasizes adoption, care by relatives, and transition services for young adults who have aged out of care. One result was the start of the Permanency Care Assistance program in FY 2011. This is a new option for youth who would otherwise grow up in foster care because going home or being adopted are not viable options. In FY 2011, the legal custody of 204 children had been transferred from DFPS to relatives or close family friends who receive monthly financial support. More information about Fostering Connections is available on the DFPS public website at [www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us).

### Enhanced Family Centered Safety Decision Making

Child safety remains a priority as CPS continues to enhance its family-centered approach in delivering

services, usually to families with their children still at home or temporarily staying with relatives.

The department's goal is to help its staff make sound safety decisions for children. This multi-year, quality improvement initiative will help staff:

- Better identify when children are safe or unsafe.
- Better understand what family changes must occur to keep children safe and match them with the right services.
- Better understand safety as it relates to permanent homes.
- Build a culture that supports families.

In FY 2011, CPS expanded training to more staff and focused on clarifying the difference between safety and risk; protective capacities; and safety plans vs. family plans. The Texas Children's Justice Act Project also gave DFPS a grant to train staff on the importance of collecting sufficient information before making decisions about a family.

### Disproportionality

CPS has been striving since 2004 to reduce the disproportionate representation of African-American and Native-American children in the child welfare system. In FY 2011, each DFPS region had at least one dedicated staff member and there were 14 regional advisory committees promoting collaborative partnerships to address disproportionality. This initiative promotes a cultural shift within DFPS and partnerships with other entities that affect the lives of children and families. Many view Texas as a national model in addressing this issue. While it is a society-wide issue, DFPS remains committed to helping eliminate disparities for all children and families.

### Fatherhood Initiative

CPS made concerted efforts in FY 2011 to more effectively engage fathers in the child welfare system. Since 2009, CPS has had a Fatherhood Initiative and a dedicated position to help increase permanent living solutions for children in foster care and encourage fathers or the paternal family members to be engaged in their children's well-being. The initiative



includes other organizations such as the American Humane Association, Office of the Attorney General, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), Texas Center for the Judiciary, Supreme Court Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth, and Families, National Fatherhood Initiative, and the North Texas Fatherhood Initiative.

### Public Awareness to Decrease Accidental Child Deaths

In recent years, CPS collaborated with other DFPS programs and Health and Human Services agencies to increase public awareness of three causes of accidental child deaths: water fatalities, hyperthermia, and co-sleeping.

An average of 81 children drowned each year since DFPS began tracking these deaths in 2005. DFPS identified 76 water fatalities in 2005, 70 in 2006, 63 in 2007, 82 in 2008, 113 in 2009 and 84 in 2010, and 79 in 2011 as of August 31, 2011. Texas led the nation in hyperthermia (hot car) deaths with 6 in 2011. In FY 2011, CPS worked with Child Care Licensing on its annual "See and Save" public awareness campaign on preventing drowning and hot car deaths ([www.SeeAndSave.org](http://www.SeeAndSave.org)).

In FY 2011, CPS investigated 168 child deaths that involved a child sleeping with an adult or older child. This is a decline from the 178 co-sleeping fatalities in FY 2010. In FY 2011, DFPS ran TV and Radio spots, engaged both social media and the news media to increase the public's awareness of safe sleep practices for infants and the risks of co-sleeping. In FY 2011, all CPS caseworkers and supervisors completed an interactive web-based training called "Safe Sleep 360" that was developed in tandem with the Texas Department of State Health Services. A safe sleep training curriculum is available to the public at [www.ItsUpToYou.org](http://www.ItsUpToYou.org). This resource was created for anyone who works with parents, grandparents, or caregivers of infants.

## Abuse and Neglect Fatalities

It is a heart-breaking tragedy whenever a child dies because of abuse or neglect, and CPS has developed both internal and external mechanisms to review these fatalities. Citizen review teams, child fatality review teams, CPS child safety specialists, regional CPS child death review committees, and the state Child Safety Review Committee all review child deaths. While each entity reviews child deaths for unique purposes, a common goal is to help identify the causes of child fatalities and develop strategies, programs, and training to reduce the rate of preventable child deaths as well as provide intervention services to families and children at risk.

For more information on child abuse and neglect fatalities, see DFPS Data Book, page 155.

## Investigation and Placement Services

### Investigations

State law requires anyone who believes a child is being abused or neglected to report the situation so that CPS can investigate. Interviewing children, parents, and others who know about the family is an important part of a CPS investigation. These interviews help determine if child abuse or neglect occurred, if the children are safe, and to assess the risk of further harm to the child. It is critical to child safety and to families that investigations are completed in a timely manner.

If needed, CPS caseworkers may refer families for services in the community, such as individual or family therapy, parenting classes, medical assistance, mental health services, or programs offering financial assistance for utilities, rent, or child care.

If there is concern about the continued safety of a child, the caseworker may refer the family for family-based safety services. These services are provided in



the home and help make sure children are healthy and safe. When safety for the child cannot be ensured, CPS may petition the court to have the child removed from the parents' custody and placed into foster care. For additional information on family-based safety services and foster care, see the sections below.

For more information on CPS investigations and investigation process, see: DFPS Data Book, page 29, example flow chart and pages 39-47.

### Family-Based Safety Services

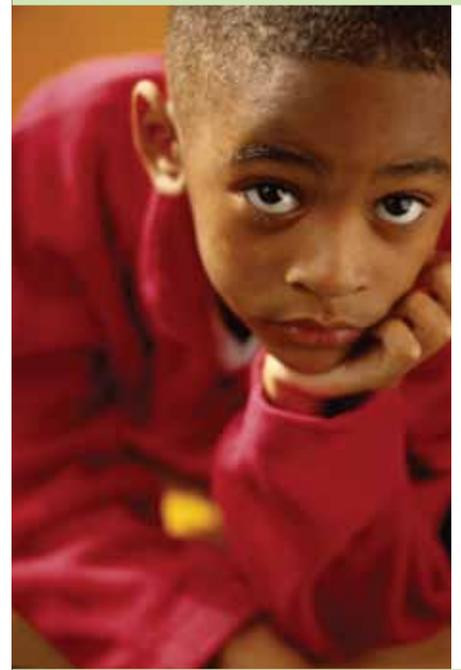
When child safety can be reasonably assured, CPS provides in-home services to help stabilize the family and reduce the risk of future abuse or neglect. Family-Based Safety Services (FBSS) can help avoid the need to remove children from their homes or make it possible for the children to return home by strengthening the family's ability to protect their child and reduce threats to their child's safety. FBSS include family counseling, crisis intervention, parenting classes, substance abuse treatment, domestic violence intervention, and day care. Most children getting these services continue to live at home while CPS works with their families. In some cases, children may live elsewhere temporarily, usually with relatives or close family friends, until it is safe for them to return home.

For more information on in-home services, see: DFPS Data Book, pages 48-49 and 71.

### Family Group Decision Making

Family Group Decision Making is a collection of practices used to work with and engage children, youth, and families on safety, planning services, and decision making.

- Family Team Meeting is a rapid response to address critical child safety and placement concerns. They are used to ensure child safety in the earliest stages of CPS involvement. Family Team Meetings engage the family, community members, and other caregivers to help make critical decisions about child





protection, safety, placement, and permanent living arrangements.

- Family Group Conference is a process where families join relatives, friends, and others to develop a plan to ensure children are safe, cared for, and protected from future harm. The family group is given a lot of decision-making authority and responsibility.
- Circles of Support are youth-driven meetings to develop a plan for older youth to transition from foster care to adulthood and to connect youth to caring adults who will support them. For more information on Circles of Support, see “Services for Foster Youth Transitioning out of Care”.

For more information, see: [DFPS Data Book, pages 72-73.](#)

### Foster Care

When children cannot live safely with their own families, CPS may petition the court to remove them from their homes. They may be placed temporarily with relatives, a foster family, an emergency shelter, or a foster care facility. These caregivers provide a safe, nurturing environment for children in CPS care. Foster families receive a daily reimbursement for the costs of caring for children. CPS and foster parents are required to arrange all educational, medical, dental, and therapeutic services needed by the child. Some children have emotional or other needs that are hard to address in a foster home. So, sometimes they live in specialized group homes, residential treatment centers, or other facilities. If parental rights are intact, CPS provides services to the parents until the family is reunited, or the courts approve or another permanent living arrangement for the children. The court has ongoing oversight while a child is in foster care.

For more information on foster care and other placements: [DFPS Data Book, pages 50-58, 62-67, and 156-173.](#)

### Kinship Care

DFPS and the courts must consider temporary placements with relatives when removing children from their homes for their safety. DFPS asks parents to provide contact information for relatives and close family friends who may be able to care for their children. DFPS notifies relatives to explain their options and tell them about the support they can receive from the state to help care for children. Kinship caregivers may also provide permanent homes by adopting or accepting legal responsibility for children. For generations, extended families have helped rear children when parents are having a difficult time. Kinship care gives children more stability and a connection to family when they cannot live with their birth parents.

For more information on Kinship Care, see: [DFPS Data Book, pages 52 and 68.](#)

### Adoption

When a child cannot safely return home, the court may terminate the parents’ rights, making the child available for adoption. The number of DFPS children who were adopted increased significantly from FY 2005 to FY 2011. One major factor was the number of kinship adoptions, which includes adoptions by relatives and others with significant, longstanding relationships with the children or families. Kinship adoptions in Texas have more than doubled since 2005 and now account for about 40 percent of DFPS adoptions. 4,635 DFPS children were adopted in FY 2011. DFPS approves adoptive homes and also contracts with licensed, private child-placing agencies to increase the number of parents available to adopt children in foster care. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has recognized DFPS for increasing adoptions each year since 1999.

For more information on adoption, see: [DFPS Data Book, pages 52, 56-62, 64-65, 162-167 and 204-209.](#)



# Older kids need love too!

## Leah Garcia, adopted at age 17, never gave up hope she would find her “forever family”

For thousands of Texas children without permanent, loving homes, the wait to be adopted may be long and discouraging. No matter their age, most of these children still hold out hope that someday, someone will open their heart and give them a family they can call their own.

17-year-old Leah Garcia has a great smile and a wonderful personality to match. Yet since entering foster care at age 12, she spent years asking herself, “Why can’t I get adopted? Why haven’t I been picked? Am I that bad of a person? What is going on that no one wants me?”

“Once I hit 16 years old, I figured no one would want me because I was almost old enough to go out on my own,” she says. “I prayed to God to give me a sign to have hope. My caseworker said she would find someone.”

Child Protective Services Adoption Caseworker Susan Brezina of Corpus Christi says Leah’s story weighed on her heart. “Leah saw kids in her foster home get adopted but nobody picked her, nobody loved her. I told her I was going to find her an adoptive family—whatever it took. She didn’t believe me and at one point, I think she gave up hope. I told her

I knew it would be hard but I would keep trying. And, I told her that once she found an adoptive home, I hoped she would advocate for other teenagers who are also looking for loving homes.”

Brezina says the fear of rejection for older children is a major hurdle. “Just think back to when you were a teenager. Can you even imagine having to live in a stranger’s house and having them watch everything you do? It’s a tough sell to get teens to take that leap of faith and trust a family to love them and not reject them. But, when it works, it’s magic.”

Finally, Leah found her family at an adoption recruitment event, and her life changed forever. “I had always been interested in adopting children,” says her adoptive father. “We had two children but my wife had complications during her last pregnancy. We wanted a girl but I didn’t want to put my wife through that again. That’s how we got into adoption.”

Leah never thought she would finally find her forever family. “I didn’t even know I was going to find parents at the recruitment event—I thought it was just to take pictures,” says Leah. “I just went there and acted like myself, like I usually do, and that’s when I met the people who would become my adoptive parents. I asked God, please let it be them.”

Now that she has a family of her own, Leah spreads the word about the joys of adopting older children, speaking at Rotary Club meetings

and adoption recruitment events. “I care and want to speak out for the older kids,” says Leah. “Any time someone calls, I am ready to go. I tell other kids there’s someone out there for them. I tell people that older kids need love too, someone they can depend on.”

Her adoptive dad says his family is truly blessed to have Leah. “She’s really made an impact on our family. She and our boys are really close. If you were to spend a day with our family, you’d think they’d she’s been part of our family for the longest time. Give those older kids a chance. You’ll never know. Leah’s been a real blessing.”

**Youth adopted at age 17 says, “I tell people older kids need love too.”**



## Texas Adoption Resource Exchange

The Texas Adoption Resource Exchange (TARE) website ([www.AdoptChildren.org](http://www.AdoptChildren.org)) is an important recruitment tool for prospective foster and adoptive homes. Integrated with the “Why Not Me?” campaign, the website’s most prominent feature is its photo-listing of Texas children awaiting adoption. TARE also includes children’s profiles and videos.

DFPS added new features to the website at the end of the fiscal year to give families more information and to streamline the process. Families can now register and create a free profile where they can upload a family photo and save their adoption preferences. They can ask about specific children and get quick updates on the status of their inquiries. Profiles include information on whether a family’s home has been screened and approved. Those who are not registered can do basic searches and learn how to become a foster or adoptive home.

TARE also offers a toll-free, nationwide Adoption and Foster Care Inquiry Line (1-800-233-3405). The information from these calls is forwarded to local CPS staff to follow up with prospective families. More information on Foster Care and Adoption is available on the TARE website at [www.AdoptChildren.org](http://www.AdoptChildren.org).

## Adoption Support Services



Adopted children who have suffered abuse or neglect often need help coping with these experiences and the loss of their birth families. CPS contracts with private agencies to provide post-adoption services to adopted children and their families. Some of these services include case management, mental



health services, therapeutic services to children and families, parent training, and support groups.

For more information on adoption support services, see: DFPS Data Book, pages 69, 174-179.

## Services for Foster Youth Transitioning Out of Care

### Circles of Support

Circles of Support is a process to support and help youth, age 16 and older, to develop a plan for when they become young adults and leave state care. It is based on Family Group Decision Making, so youth drive the process (see pages 15-16). Circles of Support includes broad participation by the youth’s support network, which often includes foster or kinship caregivers, teachers, siblings, pastors, and other relatives. These meetings are required for youth 16 and older, although they may begin as early as 14 years of age. 3,099 Circles of Support were conducted in FY 2011.

For more information, see: DFPS Data Book, page 72-73.

### Health Care Benefits

Texas provides health care to youth who age out of foster care up to the month of their 21st birthday. These youth get health care benefits through STAR Health, which is a form of Medicaid. Youth can continue to receive health care benefits up to age 23 in some circumstances but must be enrolled in an institution of higher education. STAR Health includes a medical home for each child, coordination and management of services, 24-hour nursing and behavioral health help-lines, and monitoring of psychotropic medication.

### Youth Transitioning to DADS Guardianship

When a youth aging out of DFPS care needs long-term care or support into adulthood because of an incapacitating disability, the department refers that youth to the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services



(DADS) for guardianship services. This process begins when a youth turns age 17. If a court appoints DADS as guardian, DADS assumes the main responsibility for the youth when the youth turns 18 or when the court makes its ruling. DFPS may continue to provide foster care for young adults even if they receive DADS guardianship services.

### Preparation for Adult Living

The Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) program helps youth in foster care make the transition to adulthood more successfully. PAL services include independent living assessments, financial help for a limited time, and training in such areas as financial management, job skills, educational planning, and interpersonal skills. A statewide Youth Leadership Council meets quarterly to review policies and practices. The council submits recommendations to DFPS to improve services for children and youth.

For more information on Preparation for Adult Living, see: [DFPS Data Book, page 73](#).

### Extended Foster Care

Most foster youth leave state care after their 18th birthday. But youth can stay in extended foster care through age 21 or 22, depending on their circumstances while, they pursue a high school diploma or GED. They can also remain in extended foster care:

- To attend college or a vocational or technical training program.
- To participate in a program or activity that promotes or removes barriers to employment.
- To work at least 80 hours a month.
- If they can't perform the activities above due to a documented medical condition.

Prior to FY 2011, the program was funded by the state. Thanks to legislation passed by the 81st Texas Legislature, the program was expanded and qualified for federal funding on October 1, 2010.

### Return to Care

Youth ages 18 to 20 who have aged out of foster care may return to care:

- To attend high school or complete a GED course (up to age 22).
- Attend a vocational or technical program (up to age 21).
- Return on a break from college or a technical or vocational program for at least one month but no more than four months (up to age 21).

### Education and Training Vouchers

The Education and Training Voucher (ETV) program provides financial assistance to eligible youth after they leave CPS care to help them with school expenses such as rent, computers, day care, and transportation. Youth who receive Permanency Care Assistance after age 16 are eligible for this program. The program supplements the state's Preparation for Adult Living program, as well as a tuition waiver program at state-funded universities, colleges, junior colleges, and vocational schools. The ETV program served 1,410 youth in academic year 2010-2011.

### State Tuition and Fee Waiver

Since 1993, former foster-youth and certain adopted youth have been exempt from paying tuition and most fees at state-funded colleges, community colleges, universities, and vocational schools in Texas. Later, the law was amended to extend this benefit to all youth adopted from DFPS or those whose permanent managing conservator (legal responsibility) is not their parent. The program has grown significantly since 73 students received waivers in the program's first year. According to the latest data from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2,764 former foster and 453 adopted youth used the waiver in academic year 2009-2010.



## Transition Centers

Transition centers are clearinghouses for many DFPS partner agencies to serve youth (ages 15½ to 25) who are preparing to age out or have already aged out of foster care. These centers are separately funded, privately operated, and supported by partnerships between DFPS, their providers, and the Texas Workforce Commission. The centers provide PAL services, employment readiness, job search classes and assistance, and mentoring. Partner agencies provide other services including substance abuse counseling, housing assistance, and leadership development trainings and activities. Texas had 14 transition centers across the state by the end of FY 2011. Centers are located in Abilene, Austin, Beaumont, Central Texas (Belton, Killeen, and Temple), Corpus Christi, Dallas, El Paso, Fort Worth, Houston, Kerrville, Lubbock, San Angelo, San Antonio, and Tyler. More information is available at [www.TexasYouthConnection.org](http://www.TexasYouthConnection.org).

## National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD)

The National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) is a data collection system created by the federal Administration for Children and Families to track independent living services and to learn how successfully states prepare youth to move from state care into adulthood. Texas surveys youth when they reach age 17 and then surveys some youth again at age 19 and 21. DFPS surveys a new group of 17 year olds every third year.

DFPS redesigned [www.TexasYouthConnection.org](http://www.TexasYouthConnection.org) and added a secure online survey in FY 2010 to collect this data. In FY 2011, Texas collected data for NYTD

Period A from October 1, 2010 to March 31, 2011 and NYTD Period B from April 1, 2011 to September 30, 2011. DFPS will continue to collect data in future years as well as develop a NYTD policy and a manual for Preparation for Adult Living manual for staff.

### Texas Youth Connection

The Texas Youth Connection website is a resource



for youth in foster care, alumni of foster care, or youth seeking general tips and information. This website was designed with input from youth and offers information and resources for education, finances, personal records, diversity, health, employment opportunities, food, housing, books, stories, hotlines, contacts and other information. More information is available at [www.TexasYouthConnection.org](http://www.TexasYouthConnection.org).

## Texas Youth Hotline

The Texas Youth Hotline serves youth under 21 years of age, including those who have aged out of the foster care system. Youth may contact this statewide hotline at 1-800-98-YOUTH for crisis counseling, information, and referrals. The hotline can help young adults locate services available in their communities.

## Working with Partners

### Foster Parents and Child Placing Agencies

Thousands of children are in the legal custody of DFPS due to being victims of abuse and neglect. Foster parents and private child-placing agencies help DFPS support these children through a close collaborative partnership. DFPS supports foster and adoptive parents by providing federal funds to the statewide Texas Council on Adoptable Children and the Texas Foster Family Association. DFPS also provides federal funds to local foster parent associations. These funds help in the education, training, and retention of foster and adoptive parents so they can better meet the needs of children.

### Child Welfare Boards

CPS is administered by the state but many counties provide some funding for foster children's needs. Child Welfare Boards exist in more than 200 of the 254 counties in Texas. They provide significant support to enhance the care and services to foster children and their families.

CPS works with the Texas Council of Child Welfare Boards (TCCWB), a statewide network of more than 2,000 volunteers appointed by county commissioners'





courts, to develop resources, programs, and strategies to enhance services for vulnerable children and families. Leaders of regional councils meet with CPS twice a year for educational programs and to share information and strategies that promote the safety and well being of children.

### **Giving Texas Children Promise**

Children across Texas are helped by three innovative community partners programs developed by Giving Texas Children Promise (GTCP) (formerly Greater Texas Community Partners). These programs are Rainbow Rooms, the Adopt-a-Caseworker Program, and the Purchasing Partnership Program.

- Rainbow Rooms are emergency resource centers to help meet the critical needs of abused and neglected children. Rainbow Rooms provide car seats, clothing, shoes, underwear, baby formula, school supplies, and safety and hygiene items to children entering foster or relative care as well as children living in poverty in their own homes who are being assisted by FBSS caseworkers.
- The Adopt-a-Caseworker Program connects CPS caseworkers with individuals, churches, businesses, and organizations who help meet the needs of the children involved with CPS.
- The Purchasing Partnerships Program obtains drastically reduced prices on many essential items stocked in the Rainbow Rooms across Texas.

These unique partnerships support 150 Rainbow Rooms and 2,202 adopted caseworkers at various sites across Texas.

### **Texas Supreme Court**

Once children are removed from their homes, courts play a critical role in determining their future and make the final decisions on what happens to them. No child enters or leaves foster care without a court order. A judge decides where the child will live and for how long. Every day, Texas courts decide whether a child goes home or to live with a relative, visits a sibling, or becomes eligible for adoption.

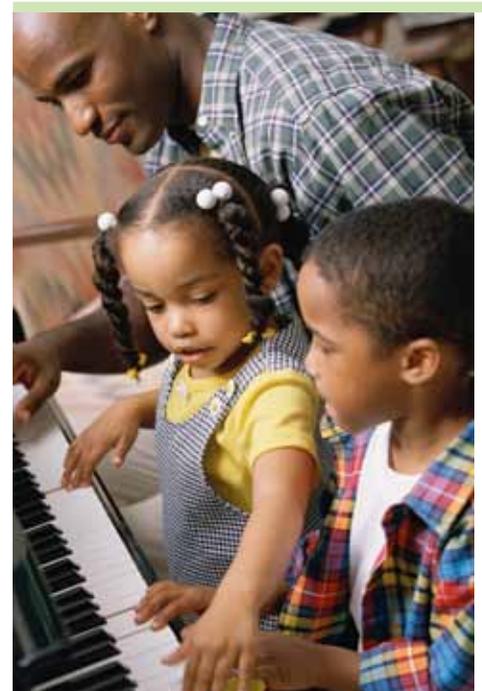
In November 2007, the Supreme Court of Texas created the Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth, and Families (Children's Commission) to improve child protection courts and seek better outcomes for children and families involved in the child-welfare system. Commission membership includes judges, elected officials, attorneys, and staff from DFPS and the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, and other organizations.

In October 2010, the Children's Commission's Education Committee identified guiding principles for improving the education outcomes for children and youth in foster care. These principles serve as the blueprint for the commission's subcommittees and workgroups as they develop recommendations that will be considered in January 2012. Topics include:

- School-readiness.
- Education stability for children and youth in foster care.
- Barriers and challenges that prevent children and youth from being successful in school.
- Ensuring youth in foster care take advantage of opportunities for education and training.

### **Parent Collaboration Group**

The statewide Parent Collaboration Group is a partnership between DFPS and parents who have successfully navigated the CPS system. The group is made up of regional parent representatives. It meets quarterly and helps CPS improve its policies and practices. Since its creation in FY 2002, the group has developed parent support groups in each CPS region. These support groups help parents learn about and navigate the child welfare system.



# Prevention and Early Intervention

## Responsibilities

The responsibilities of Prevention and Early Intervention are to:

- Work with Texas communities to develop services to prevent child abuse and neglect, delinquency, running away, and truancy.
- Plan, develop, and administer a comprehensive, unified approach to delivering prevention services to avoid fragmentation and duplication.
- Make prevention and early intervention services more accountable by demonstrating the effectiveness or public benefit of programs.

## 2011 Accomplishments and Initiatives

### Interagency Collaboration

PEI continued to lead the Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) for Building Healthy Families during FY 2011 through a memorandum of understanding adopted by the council's 11 member agencies in FY 2010. In FY 2011, the agencies continued work on several of the recommendations they submitted in a final report to the Texas Legislature in December 2009. These included PEI releasing a Request for Proposal for one-stop shop where the needs of families with multiple issues could be met. PEI also began exploring implementing different contracting methods.

### PEI Services

PEI contracts with community-based agencies and organizations to provide services to prevent the abuse, neglect, delinquency, and truancy of Texas children. Services are voluntary and provided at no cost to participants. However, all services are not available in all Texas communities. To find out if services are available in your community, look for Prevention and Early Intervention on the DFPS website at [www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us).

For more information, see: DFPS Data Book pages 107-115 and 222-227.

### Community Youth Development (CYD)

The CYD program contracts with community-based organizations to develop juvenile-delinquency prevention programs in ZIP codes with high juvenile crime rates. Approaches used by communities to prevent delinquency have included mentoring, youth-employment programs, career preparation, and alterna-

tive recreational activities. Communities prioritize and fund specific prevention services according to local needs. CYD services are available in 15 targeted Texas ZIP codes. In FY 2011, 19,731 youth received services through the CYD program.

### Services to At-Risk Youth (STAR)

The STAR program contracts with community agencies to offer family crisis intervention counseling, short-term emergency respite care, and individual and family counseling. Youth as old as age 17 and their families are eligible if they experience conflict at home, truancy or delinquency, or a youth who runs away from home. STAR services are available in all 254 Texas counties. Each STAR contractor also provides universal child abuse prevention services, ranging from local media campaigns to informational brochures, and parenting classes. In FY 2011, 30,168 youth received services through the STAR program.

### Statewide Youth Services Network

These contracts make community and evidence-based juvenile delinquency prevention programs available to youth ages 10-17 in each DFPS region. In FY 2011, 5,720 clients received services through Statewide Youth Services Network funded programs.

### Texas Families: Together and Safe

Texas Families: Together and Safe funds evidence-based, community-based programs to alleviate stress and promote parental competencies and behaviors that increase the ability of families to become self-sufficient and successfully nurture their children.



The goals of the program are to:

- Improve and enhance access to family support services.
- Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of community-based family support services.
- Enable children to stay at home by providing preventative services.
- Increase collaboration among local programs, government agencies, and families.

In FY 2011, 2,114 families received services, including 2,110 families in which the primary caregiver received services.

### Texas Runaway and Youth Hotlines

The toll-free Texas Runaway Hotline and the Texas Youth Hotline offer crisis intervention, telephone counseling, and referrals to troubled youth and families. Volunteers answer the phones and interact with callers facing a variety of problems including family conflict, delinquency, truancy, and abuse and neglect issues.

- Texas Runaway Hotline - [www.TexasRunaway.org](http://www.TexasRunaway.org) or 1-800-580HELP.
- Texas Youth Hotline - [www.TexasYouth.org](http://www.TexasYouth.org) or 1-800-98YOUTH.

### Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention

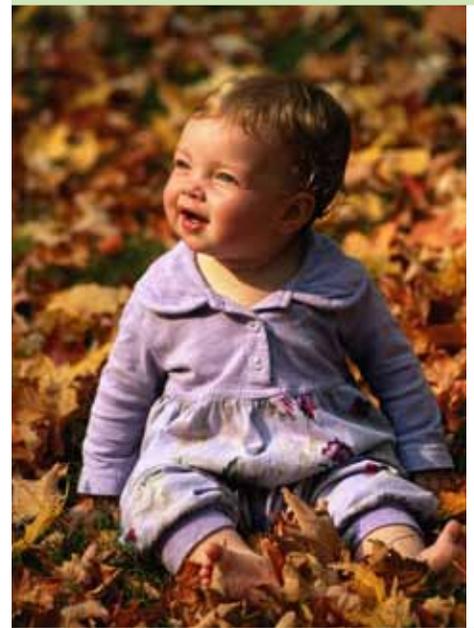
The Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention program builds community awareness of prevention services, strengthens community and parental involvement in child abuse prevention efforts, and encourages families to use the services available to them. This program funds a variety of community-based organizations to provide child abuse and neglect prevention services. These programs include the Relief Nursery, Family Support, Rural Family Support programs, Fatherhood and Leadership for Effective Parenting and Multidisciplinary Approach to Prevention, as well as various special initiatives and public awareness campaigns as noted in other sections of this report. In FY 2011, 461 families received services through CBCAP funded programs.



### Tertiary Child Abuse Prevention

Through this program, children who have been abused or neglected (or are at-risk of the same) receive a variety of volunteer, commu-

nity-based prevention, intervention, and other services after they leave CPS care. The goals of the program include reducing child maltreatment and the number of families re-entering the Child Protective Services (CPS) system. The program also strives to improve the quality and availability of services for children after they leave CPS care and to enhance a statewide network of child abuse prevention programs. In FY 2011, 44 families received services through the Tertiary Child Abuse Prevention program.



### Family Strengthening

A variety of Family Strengthening services are available statewide that have been proven to effectively increase family protective factors. These services are provided to increase the resiliency of families and prevent child abuse and neglect. These programs must also foster strong community collaboration to provide a continuum of family services. In FY 2011, 938 families received services through the Family Strengthening program.

### Youth Resiliency (YR)

Youth Resiliency programs provide services proven to increase protective factors for youth. A variety of services are available across the state to increase youth resiliency and prevent juvenile delinquency. These programs must foster strong community collaboration to provide a spectrum of services for participating youth. In FY 2011, 1,162 clients received services through the Youth Resiliency program, including 1,066 children who were at risk.

### Community-Based Family Services

This program serves families who are investigated by CPS but whose allegations are unsubstantiated. Services include home visits, case management, and additional social services to foster a safe and stable home environment. In FY 2011, 280 families received services through the Community-Based Family Services program.

# Bullying takes many forms.



## Jessica Larson and Sarah Walters are counselors at STARRY, an agency funded by DFPS.

Child abuse prevention is everyone's business and no single entity can prevent it alone. That's why DFPS funds programs in communities across Texas to help battle child abuse using local approaches and resources.

For example, a Round Rock agency named STARRY has a program that combats bullying. Bullying takes many forms and in recent years cyber-bullying has been on the rise. This form of bullying often goes unreported, leaving its victims angry, sad, and embarrassed.

According to STARRY, national statistics count nearly 3 million students who report experiencing some form of bullying each year. More than one in three young people say they have experienced online bullying.

"It's a lot easier to be a bully these days because you don't have to say mean things to someone's face," says Jessica Larson (left), the STARRY counselor who helps lead her agency's cyber-bullying presentations. "Now youth are creating websites dedicated to slandering someone. You can't always pick out the one who is doing the bullying anymore."

Larson and her co-presenter, STARRY Counselor

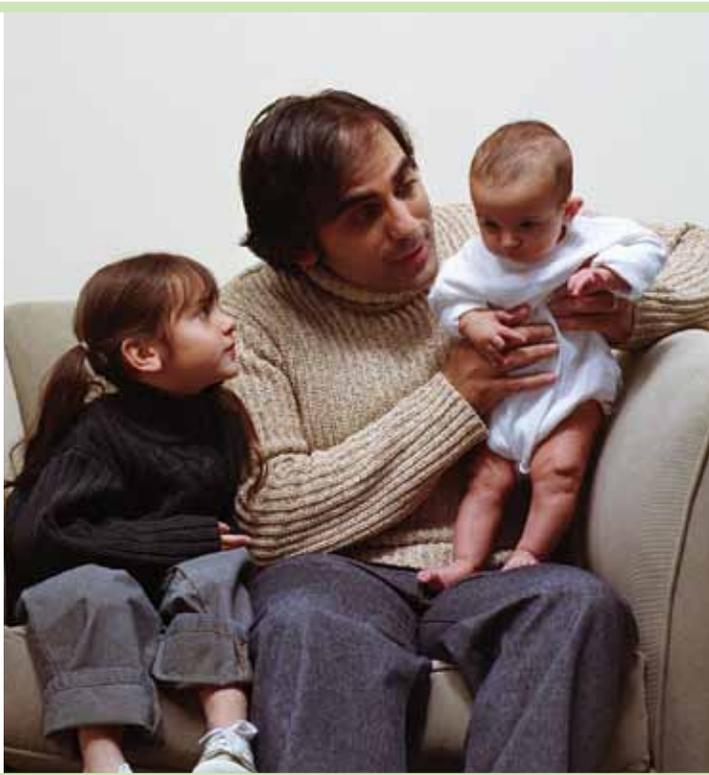
## Abuse-prevention counselors say, "You can't always spot a bully."

Sarah Walters, have suggestions for parents and students dealing with bullying. "We tell youth and children, first, before you take action, take five minutes to breathe. You don't want to react in the heat of anger," says Walters. "Walk away and tell an adult. If dealing with text message bullying, you can contact your phone provider and get the messages blocked. If dealing with a website, you can contact the internet provider and report the abuse. They will then take action."

Larson recommends action if there is continuing bullying that begins to take the form of physical threats. "Go to the police," she says "Physical threats of any kind are serious. And, if you are a student with a friend who is a bully or is being bullied, tell someone. You can make a difference."

The STARRY Cyber-bullying program is available to groups, educators, civic leaders, and others. STARRY provides free individual and family counseling as well as programs geared toward pre-teen and teenage students and focused on solutions. STARRY also provides services to youth in the DFPS Services to At-Risk (STAR) program and has an emergency shelter for children who have been removed from their homes by due to abuse or neglect.

"STARRY prizes the opportunity to work with DFPS," says Richard Singleton, executive director of STARRY. "We share a collegial, collaborative relationship and have a long history of partnering to preserve and protect families. We look forward to continuing to work together in the important work of helping Texas families."



### PEI Child Abuse Prevention Special Initiatives

In FY 2011, DFPS created the fourth annual prevention calendar for Texas families titled “Help Me Grow Up to Be...The Very Best of Me.” The calendar gave parents and other caregivers practical advice on soothing a fussy baby, potty training, water safety, bullying, chores, and more. The calendar’s messages are consistent with prior assessments of the most effective strategies for prevention outreach. These assessments indicate the best approach is to directly target families with user-friendly outreach materials that give parents tools they can use to strengthen their parenting skills.

PEI distributed nearly 500,000 calendars to about 1,000 agencies, contractors, and partners across Texas, including:

- More than 250 social-service providers.
- Licensed child-care facilities, child welfare boards, and child advocacy centers.
- Elementary and secondary schools and Head Start programs.
- Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices in many locations.
- Local churches and medical facilities.

English and Spanish versions of the calendar were made available for free download at [www.ItsUpToYou.org](http://www.ItsUpToYou.org). The calendar was endorsed by the Texas Pediatric Society and the Texas Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

### Partners in Prevention Training Conference

Each year, DFPS hosts the Annual Partners in Prevention Training Conference in Central Texas. The conference brings together social service professionals, advocates, educators, law enforcement professionals, child-care professionals, community leaders, and faith leaders interested in improving programs and sharing expertise. The conference is open to prevention and early intervention agencies that contract with DFPS and other prevention service providers and interested parties. The conference was planned in collaboration with the Texas Department of State Health Services, Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services, Texas Youth Commission, Texas Education Agency, Texas Health and Human Services Commission, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services, Texas Juvenile Probation Commission, and the Texas Workforce Commission. About 300 people attended the Partners in Prevention Conference in October 2010.

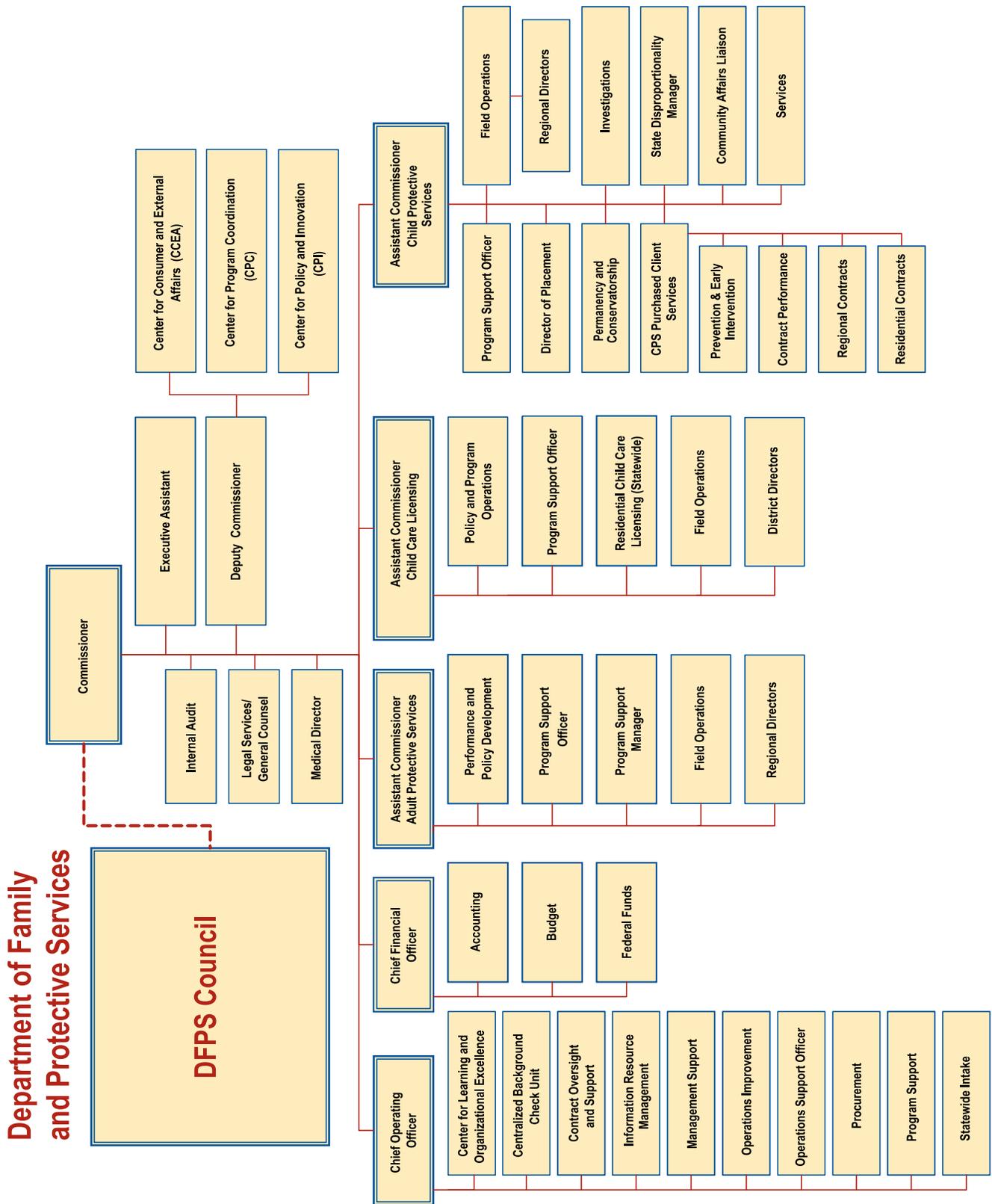
### Public Awareness Campaigns

During FY 2011, PEI and other DFPS divisions carried out public awareness campaigns targeting child safety. Those efforts included the “Room to Breathe” campaign, an effort to address factors associated with Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and other unexplained infant death. PEI’s conducted community-based outreach on safe infant sleeping that was developed in collaboration with the Texas Department of State Health Services. As part of this effort, PEI distributed a fact sheet titled “Safe Sleep for Babies” and infant onesies and magnets. In July 2010, PEI delivered a train-the-trainer curriculum on safe infant sleep to three target counties to make information available through trusted community partners. In FY 2011, PEI made the curriculum available statewide. More on this campaign may be found at [www.BabyRoom-ToBreathe.org](http://www.BabyRoom-ToBreathe.org) or [www.BebeEspacioParaRespirar.org](http://www.BebeEspacioParaRespirar.org).



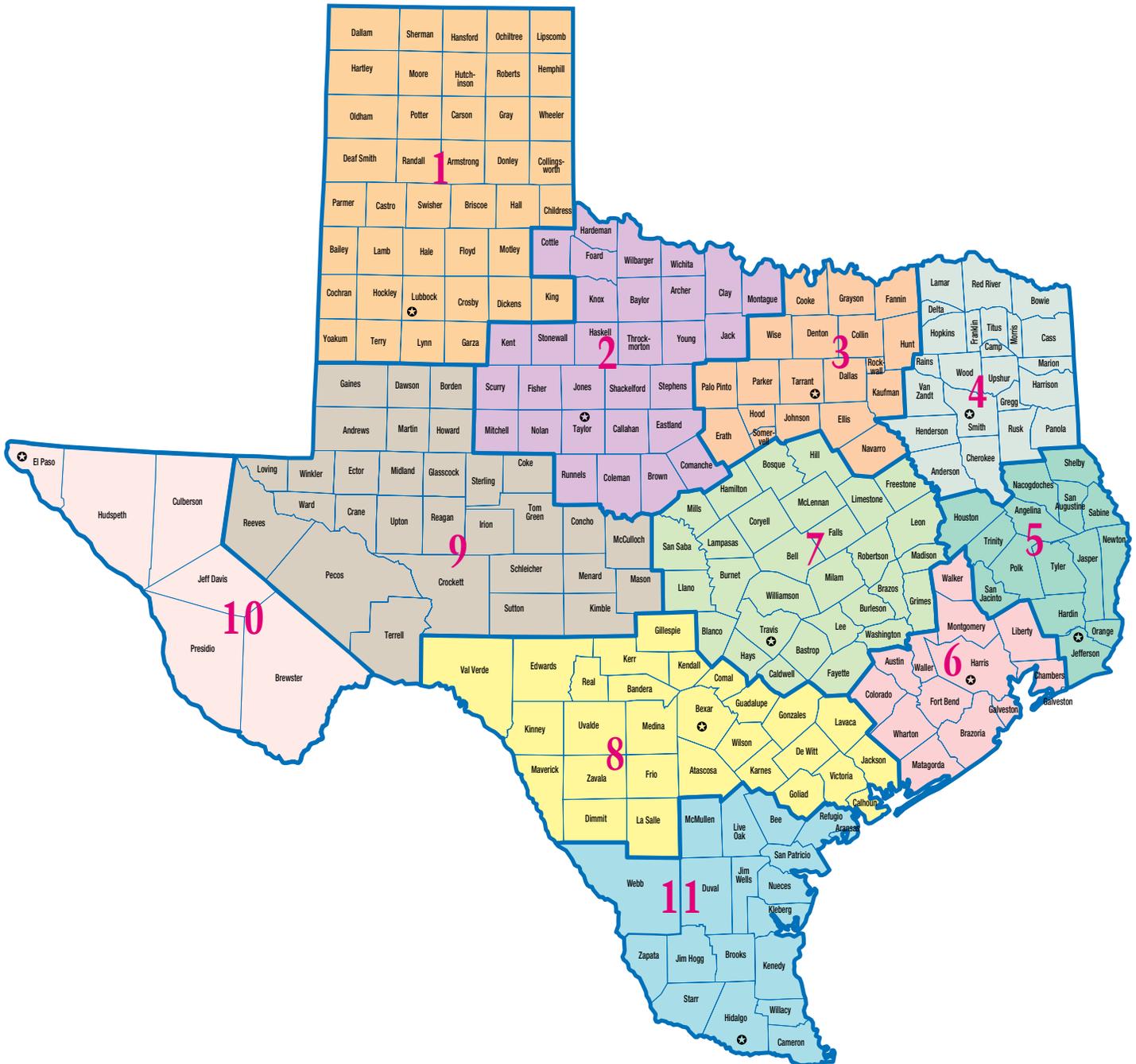
# Organizational Chart

## Texas Department of Family and Protective Services 2011 Annual Report



# DFPS Regional Boundaries

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services 2011 Annual Report



# Hotlines and Online Resources

**Texas Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400 or [www.TxAbuseHotline.org](http://www.TxAbuseHotline.org)**

Report abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children, the elderly, or people with disabilities

**APS Facility Investigations: 1-800-647-7418**

Report abuse, neglect, or exploitation in facilities

**Foster Care and Adoption Inquiry Line: 1-800-233-3405**

Provides information on how to become a foster or adoptive parent

**Child Care Information: 1-800-862-5252**

Delivers information about child care in Texas

**Office of Consumer Affairs: 1-800-720-7777**

Make an inquiry about an existing DFPS case or make a complaint

**Texas Runaway Hotline: 1-888-580-HELP**

Provides peer counseling to runaways and family members

**Texas Youth Hotline: 1-800-98YOUTH**

Provides peer counseling to youth and family members for family conflicts, delinquency, truancy, and running away

## DFPS Web Sites

[www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us)

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)

[www.TxAbuseHotline.org](http://www.TxAbuseHotline.org)

Report abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children, the elderly, or people with disabilities

[www.AdoptChildren.org](http://www.AdoptChildren.org)

Adopt children through the Texas Adoption Resource Exchange

[www.TexasRunaway.org](http://www.TexasRunaway.org)

Texas Runaway Hotline

[www.TexasYouth.org](http://www.TexasYouth.org)

Texas Youth Hotline

[www.ItsUpToYou.org](http://www.ItsUpToYou.org)

Child Abuse Prevention

[www.EveryonesBusiness.org](http://www.EveryonesBusiness.org)

Adult Abuse Prevention

[www.TxChildcareSearch.org](http://www.TxChildcareSearch.org)

Search Texas Child Care

[www.VolunteerDFPS.org](http://www.VolunteerDFPS.org)

Become a DFPS Volunteer

[www.SeeAndSave.org](http://www.SeeAndSave.org)

Safety for children around water or in cars

[www.TexasYouthConnection.org](http://www.TexasYouthConnection.org)

Resources for youth in foster care

[www.DontBelInTheDark.org](http://www.DontBelInTheDark.org)

Choose regulated child care

[www.BabyRoomToBreathe.org](http://www.BabyRoomToBreathe.org)

Safe sleeping tips for babies

## DEPARTMENT ADDRESS

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services  
(512) 438-4800

### MAILING:

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Austin, TX 78714-9030

### PHYSICAL

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